

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A lithographic apparatus comprising:  
an illumination system to provide a ~~projection~~ beam of radiation;  
a support structure to support a patterning structure, the patterning structure serving to impart the ~~projection~~ beam of radiation with a pattern in its cross-section;  
a substrate table for holding a substrate;  
a projection system to project the patterned beam of radiation onto a target portion of the substrate;  
a dust-tight storage container defining a non-vacuum storage space to contain at least one patterning structure, wherein the storage container is arranged to be coupled with a transfer container to exchange said at least one patterning structure through a closeable passage between the transfer container and the storage container; and  
a vacuum chamber to receive said at least one patterning ~~means~~ structure via or from the storage container.
2. (Original) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the transfer container is particle-tight.
3. (Original) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the lithographic apparatus further comprises a vacuum pump to evacuate gas from the vacuum chamber.
4. (Currently Amended) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the lithographic apparatus further comprises a further vacuum chamber in fluid communication with the vacuum chamber via a passage which is vacuum closeable and a transfer mechanism to transfer said at least one patterning structure through the passage.
5. (Original) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the storage container is constructed and arranged to be coupled with the transfer container such that a

part of a first shutter of the storage container and a part of a second shutter of the transfer container are coupled in order to be moved simultaneously into said storage space.

6. (Original) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 5, wherein at least one of the first and second shutters is arranged to support the patterning structure.

7. (Currently Amended) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 5, wherein in use, while moving the patterning structure into the storage space, ~~respective outer parts of the respective shutters move outside the storage space and~~ respective inner parts of the respective shutters move into the storage space together with the patterning structure.

8. (Original) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the lithographic apparatus further comprises a holder to hold the patterning structure when moved inside the storage space.

9. (Original) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the lithographic apparatus further comprises slideable walls forming walls of the vacuum chamber.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a device comprising:  
connecting a substantially dust-tight, non-vacuum-compatible transfer container in a dust-tight transfer position against an outer portion of a lithographic apparatus;  
transferring a patterning structure from the transfer container into a substantially dust-tight non-vacuum storage space of the lithographic apparatus;  
transferring the patterning structure ~~from~~ from the storage space into a vacuum chamber;  
illuminating the transferred patterned structure with a beam of radiation to form a patterned beam of radiation; and  
projecting the patterned beam of radiation onto a target portion of a substrate.

11. (Original) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising:  
pumping the vacuum chamber to produce a substantially vacuum ambience;

transferring the patterning structure from the vacuum chamber into a further vacuum chamber in a substantially vacuum state, wherein the patterning structure is placed into an illumination position in the further vacuum chamber for forming the patterned beam.

12. (New) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said vacuum chamber is arranged inside the non-vacuum storage space of the dust-tight storage container.

13. (New) A device manufacturing method according to claim 10, further comprising forming said vacuum chamber inside the dust-tight non-vacuum storage space of the storage container.

14. (New) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising slideable wall portions arranged within said dust-tight storage container, said slideable wall portions enclosing at least part of said vacuum chamber.

15. (New) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said slideable wall portions are configured to abut a portion of a passage that connect said vacuum chamber to a further vacuum chamber.

16. (New) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said slideable wall portions are separate from wall portions that define said dust-tight storage container.

17. (New) A lithographic apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a transfer device, said transfer device including a wall portion enclosing at least part of said vacuum chamber.